

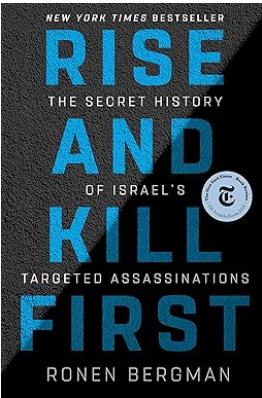
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THE SECRET HISTORY OF ISRAEL'S TARGETED ASSASSINATIONS

RONEN BERGMAN

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"Ronen Bergman has set out in incontestable detail the history and scale of Israel's use of extrajudicial killing as an instrument of defense and foreign policy. His material is stark and sensational, but he steers a steady course through it, even pausing along the way to debate the effectiveness and morality of his subject. The result is a compelling read whatever your point of view."—**John le Carré**

"This remarkable account of Israel's targeted-killing programs is the product of nearly eight years of research into what is arguably the most secretive and impenetrable intelligence community in the world. Bergman, an investigative reporter and military analyst, interviewed hundreds of insiders, including assassins, and obtained thousands of classified documents."—**The New Yorker**

"America's difficult relationship with targeted killing and the dilemmas we may face in the future are beautifully illuminated by the longer story of Israel's experiences with assassination in its own endless war against terrorism. . . . Americans now have a terrific new introduction to that story with publication of Ronen Bergman's *Rise and Kill First*. It's easy to understand why Bergman's book is already a bestseller. It moves at a torrid pace and tells stories that would make Jason Bourne sit up and say 'Wow!' It is smart, thoughtful and balanced, and the English translation is superb. It deserves all of the plaudits it has already received."—**The New York Times Book Review**

"Blending history and investigative reporting, Bergman never loses sight of the ethical questions that arise when a state, founded as a refuge for a stateless people who were targets of a genocide, decides it needs to kill in order to survive. . . . This book is full of shocking moments, surprising disturbances in a narrative full of fateful twists and unintended consequences."—**The New York Times**

"Authoritative . . . a chilling portrait of the evolution of the assassination program . . . Bergman has a reputation as an indefatigable journalist who has developed hundreds of informed sources in the defense establishment over the past two decades. . . . Since World War II, Bergman calculates, the Jewish state and its pre-state paramilitary organizations have assassinated more people than any other country in the Western world."—**The Washington Post**

"A must-read . . . [Bergman is] Israel's premier chronicler of the country's principal spy services—the Mossad (Israel's CIA), Shin Bet (its internal security organ) and Aman (military intelligence)."—**Newsweek**

"A textured history of the personalities and tactics of the various secret services . . . makes the case that Israel has used assassination in the place of war, killing half a dozen Iranian nuclear scientists, for instance, rather than launching a military attack . . . [Bergman] says that while the [United States] has tighter constraints on its agents than does Israel, President George W. Bush adopted many Israeli techniques after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and President Barack Obama launched several hundred targeted killings."—**Bloomberg**

About the Author

Ronen Bergman is the senior correspondent for military and intelligence affairs for *Yedioth Ahronoth*, Israel's largest daily paid newspaper, and a contributing writer for *The New York Times Magazine*, where he reports on intelligence, national security, terrorism, and nuclear issues. Bergman is the author of five bestselling Hebrew-language nonfiction books and *The Secret War with Iran*, which was published in the United States by Free Press. Bergman is the recipient of the Sokolow Prize, Israel's most esteemed award for journalism, and the B'nai B'rith International Press Award, among other honors. A member of the Israeli bar, he graduated with honors from the University of Haifa Faculty of Law and clerked in the attorney general's office. A winner of a Chevening Scholarship from the British Foreign Office, he received a master's in international relations from Cambridge University, where he was also awarded his PhD in history.

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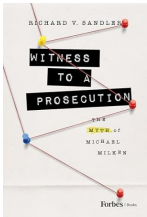
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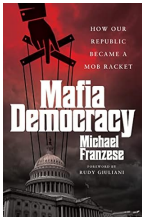
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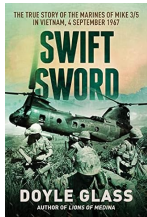
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No Holds Barred - Wonderfully Written - Gripping - Highlights Ethical Dilemmas

Reviewed in the United States on January 8, 2024

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If the events weren't true, the book would read like a string of fantastical spy operations. And frankly, the detailed description of the various missions is worth the read. But what makes this book utterly compelling is that Bergman infuses his analysis with the associated moral quandaries that accompany extra-judicial killings. No two people will agree on the entirety of the various "go / don't go" decisions that Israel's special forces have executed over the years. That said, the book (which is hard to put down) puts the current situation in stark relief regarding the interplay amongst the various terror groups, Israel's response to Oct 7th and the reaction of the international community.

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Helpful Report

Paul M. Livingston

Excellent book! Reviewed in the United States on April 27, 2024

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Written by a historian with unusual access to Israeli documents and personnel that offers some real insight into not only the early days of Israel and the evolution of both it's foreign policy and it's government. Highly recommended for anyone interested in the history of the Middle East or the evolution of Israel.

2 people found this helpful

Helpful Report

Michael Griswold

A Nation Forged in Blood Reviewed in the United States on August 20, 2018

Verified Purchase

There's not really a ton of nuance or mystery in Rise and Kill First. It is exactly what it says it is on the front cover: A secret history of Israel's targeted killing program. It's just six hundred pages of various operations. Many of these operations were successful, but the author has also included several notable failures and missteps and how these actions have changed the practices of Israel's much feared targeted killing apparatus.

The killing starts early and often. It is an odd feeling as the reader throughout because with few notable exceptions, you know that the target is going to be killed, but Bergman manages to keep it interesting by writing in a detailed, yet cinematic style where the reader can almost picture step by step the action going down. This is a special quality that doesn't happen with many books of this type. The book never dragged and always kept me engaged despite it's less than savory subject matter.

This is the type of book that one creates when the country has been under threat since day one, but it is a whole lot deeper than [plot to damage Israel, target plotter, kill him]. It's a

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Helpful Report

Howard F. Jaeckel

A brilliant, revelatory work, with one grievous flaw . . .

Reviewed in the United States on July 26, 2018

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"Rise and Kill First," Ronen Bergman's revelatory and astonishing history of Israel's targeted assassinations, is a brilliant and prodigiously researched work. Readers will be riveted and amazed both by the scale of the killings carried out by the Israeli security services and by their tactical genius. They will likewise be appalled by the price in human lives, both innocent and not so innocent, at which Israel's survival has been purchased. And they will be profoundly saddened as they comprehend how that survival has required the best and bravest of Israel's young men and women to steel themselves against the fundamental moral precepts that govern ordinary life.

Bergman bluntly tells us – and most readers will agree – that the targets of Israel's assassinations deserve to die. They have planned and executed the cold-blooded murder of hundreds of Israeli civilians – men, women, children and infants – as they go about the activities of their daily lives. No cause, no grievance, can ever

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Diran Sirinian

Mindblowing, thoroughly researched, helpful and relevant in the context of October 7th

Reviewed in the United States on January 19, 2024

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This book is a masterpiece of investigative reporting. Absolutely mindblowing in the thoroughness of it's research. Very helpful to understand the context of the October 7th Hamas terrorist attack. Balanced. Highly recommendable.

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Frederic Descamps

Amazing, gripping, exceptional

Reviewed in the United States on January 31, 2024

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Amazing book. So well researched. Deep. One of the best historical books i have ever read.

One person found this helpful

Helpful

Report



jay

The complete history of Israel

Reviewed in the United States on February 1, 2024

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I am not Jewish, but my wife is. I really enjoyed this book because it gave me the complete history of Israel from 2000 years ago and up to now. Description of different targeted killings and operations whether they went good or bad was with such detail, that, I was so fascinated I couldn't put the book down. Even now, the Prime Minister of Israel is exactly what Ronan said that he is. I really hope that the war gets over soon and Palestine has its own state. Dagan was right when he said that a 2 State Resolution is the only way to end the war. And Israel has to stay out of the new state of Palestine if there is to be any peace at all , I think. I don't read many books, but once I started this book I couldn't wait to get home from work to read more, it was unbelievably written. My thanks to Ronen Bergman And Lawrence O'Donnell because that's where I saw Ron Bergman first on the Lawrence. O'Donnell show.

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Edgar Werblowsky

Uma viagem pelos serviços de segurança de Israel

Reviewed in Brazil on June 29, 2022

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Um livro muito bem escrito, com uma profundidade de detalhes sobre as operações dos serviços de inteligência de Israel, seu diretores, os feitos bem sucedidos, os mal sucedidos, as questões humanas e morais. Grande foco nos personagens, trazendo seus dilemas e desafios para perto de nós. As relações entre os chefes do Mossad, Shin Bet, Aman e os primeiros ministros. As intrigas. As falhas morais. As relações entre o Mossad e a CIA. O impacto do 11/9 sobre a luta conjunta, especialmente entre Israel e EUA, contra o terrorismo. Um livro que você não conseguirá largar. Mesmo para pessoas bastante inteiradas sobre as operações do Mossad, a obra traz revelações pouco conhecidas.

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Gabriel Stein

Excellent

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on August 30, 2023

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This is an excellent, well, written and above all very well researched book. The nature of the topic means that it is difficult to verify some of the statements. The author makes, but he certainly does seem to back them up. For those minded to believe that the Israeli intelligence services are omnipotent, and omniscient, it is, perhaps something of a let down. The author is not sparing of errors, mistakes or misconceptions. For those who believe that the same secret services perform a vital function or sometimes (perhaps often) prone to errors, this is an excellent book.

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Report



Luis Díez

Historia de los servicios secretos israelíes

Reviewed in Spain on December 27, 2023

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Muy interesante libro sobre la historia de los servicios secretos israelíes
La manera de pensar que ha llevado a Israel de esta manera
Describe perfectamente toda la historia de Israel desde el punto de vista de sus servicios secretos

Hay un documental en Movistar basado en este libro

Libro imprescindible para entender lo sucedido recientemente en Gaza

One person found this helpful

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chema.hinojosa

Like a spy novel, but real and better

Reviewed in Mexico on September 12, 2020

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This is the best book I've read in a couple of years.
It describes wonderfully the history of the Israeli agencies, and for the ones like me that don't know about the history of Israel, it also resumes this.

One person found this helpful

Report



AMD

A great read providing insight into the minds of Israeli intelligence agencies and its personnel

Reviewed in Canada on March 26, 2020

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It's hard to add much given that there are already > 400 reviews written here. For those considering reading this book, which is a kind of unofficial history of the Mossad; here are some points to bear in mind:

First, this book is a true page-turner. The characters, clandestine operations, and modern history, are all interesting on their own merit, and some are spellbinding. We are told about the human stories behind some of the Mossad's people: of how past chief Meir Dagan was born to Jewish refugees on an icy floor of a train heading from Ukraine to Poland at the end of WWII, how one of their agents, Nehemiah Meiri, cleverly survived the German Einsatzgruppen killing squads at age 12 and climbed out of a blood soaked pit of murdered people, and many others. The collective trauma to a such a country has innumerable consequences, particularly in the heart of the Mid East, where the country's defense and

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